

For Immediate Release

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Washington, D.C.— On November 18, 2010, Congressman Sires cosponsored legislation to protect college students from harassment. H.R. 6425, the Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act, was introduced by U.S. Senator Frank R. Lautenberg and Representative Rush Holt and would require colleges and universities to implement anti-harassment policies. H.R. 6425 was introduced in memory of Rutgers University freshman Tyler Clementi, who took his life this past September after his roommate and another student violated his privacy and harassed him.

Under this legislation, all colleges and universities receiving federal student aid would be required to implement a policy prohibiting harassment of students based on their perceived race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or religion. Schools would distribute this policy to all students and include information about follow up procedure in the event harassment occurs. Students would also receive information about counseling, mental health, and other services available to victims or perpetrators of harassment.

“The Tyler Clementi tragedy and recent suicides of several young people have reminded us all that schools need to implement and enforce anti-bullying policies,” said Congressman Sires. “Offering support services to those students facing harassment is also an important part of this bill.”

Additionally, this legislation would require that cyberbullying be recognized as a form of harassment. A new grant program would also be established at the U.S. Department of Education to assist colleges and universities with establishing programs to prevent student harassment.

“All students deserve the opportunity to learn in an environment free from harassment,” said Sires. “This legislation will establish guidelines to prevent and counter bullying, and is very much needed in our school systems.”

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